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### THE KNIGHT'S SECRET. A New Story by Charles Reade.

Thomas Erpingham was knighted by Henry the Fourth for good and valiant service.

This Sir Thomas Erpingham, Knight of the Garter, afterwards fought by the side of Henry the Fifth in his French wars; and was made warden of the Cinque Ports, but retired to Norwich, his native place. He married a beautiful, pious lady and after the turbulent career and the horrors of war, desired to end his days in charity. Being wealthy and of one mind he and Lady Erpingham built a goodly church in the city and also erected and endowed a religious house for twelve monks and a prior close to the Knight's house and parted only by a high wall.

But though the retired soldier wished to be at peace with all men, two of his friars were of another mind. Friar John and Friar Richard hated each other, and could by no means be reconciled; neither had ever good word for the other; and at last Friar Richard a fair excuse for his invectives. Lady Erpingham came over to matins in the convent, and Friar John would always await her coming and attend her through the cloister with ducks and cranes and open adulations, whereas she smiled, being, in truth, a most innocent lady, affable to all, and slow to think ill of any man.

But Richard denounced John as a licentious monk, and some watched and whispered; others rebuked Richard, for it was the monastic rule to put an ill construction where the matter might be innocent.

But Richard stood his ground, and unfortunately, Richard was right; misunderstanding the lady's courtesy and charity, brother John thought his fawning advances were encouraged, and this bred in him such impudence that one day he sent her a fulsome love letter, and had the hardihood to beg for a private interview.

The lady, when she opened this letter, could hardly believe her senses; and, at last, as gentlewomen will be both unsuspicious and suspicious in the wrong place, she made up her mind that the poor, good, ridiculous friar could never have been so wicked as to write this; nay, but it was her husband's doing, and a trial of her virtue. He was older than herself, and great love is often tainted with jealousy.

This brought tears into her eyes, to think she should be doubted; but soon anger dried them, and she took occasion to put the letter suddenly into Sir Richard's hand, and fixed her eyes on him so keenly that, if there had been a flaw in his conjugal armor, no doubt those eyes had pierced it.

The Knight read the letter and turned black and white with rage; his eyes sparkled with fury and he looked so fearful that the lady was very sorry she had shown him the letter, and begged him not to take a madman's folly to heart.

"Not take it to heart!" said he. "What! these beggarly shavings that I have housed and fed, and so lessened my estate and thine; they shall corrupt thee and rob me of my one earthly treasure! Sit thou down and write."

"Write—Richard—what?—to whom?"

"Do as I bid thee, dame," said he, sternly, "and no more words."

Those were the days when husbands commanded and wives obeyed; so she sat down, trembling, and took the pen.

Then he made her write a letter back to the friar and say she compassionated his love, and her husband was to ride toward London that night, and her servant, on whom she could depend, should admit him to her by a side door of the house.

Friar John, at the appointed time, took care to be in the town—for he knew the lay-brother would not let him in so late. He came to the side door, and was admitted by a servant of the night, a reckless old soldier who cared for neither man nor devil, as the saying is, but only for his master. This man took him into a room and left him; then went for the Knight—he was not far off. Now, the unlucky monk, being come to the conquest of a beautiful lady, as he vainly thought, had five linen on, and perfumed like a civet. The Knight smelt these perfumes and rushed in upon him with his man, like dogs upon the odoriferous fox, and in the fray, without giving him to call for help, or to say one prayer, strangled him and left him dead.

But death breeds calm; the Knight's rage abated that moment, and he saw he had done a foul and remorseless deed. He would have given half his estate

to bring the offender back to life. Half his estate! his whole estate, ay, and his life, were now gone from him; they were forfeited to the law. So did he pass from rage to remorse, and from remorse to fear. The rough soldier, seeing him so stricken, made light of all, except the danger of discovery. "Come, noble sir," said he, "let us bestir ourselves, and take him back to the priory, and there bestow him, so shall we ne'er be known in it."

Thus urged, the Knight aroused himself, and he and his man brought the body out, and got as far as the wall that did part the house from the monastery. Here they were puzzled awhile but the man remembered a short ladder in the back yard, that was high enough for this job. So they set the ladder, and with much ado, got the body up it, and then drew the ladder up, and set it again on the other side; and so, with infinite trouble, the soldier got him into the priory.

The next thing was to make it appear Friar John had died a natural death. Accordingly he set him up on a rickety chair he found in the yard, balanced him, and left him, mounted the wall again, let himself down, and then dropped into the Knight's premises.

He found the Knight walking in great perturbation and then went into the house.

"Now good master," said the stout soldier, "go you to bed, and think no more on't."

"Why should I go there? I cannot sleep. Methinks I shall never sleep again."

"Then give me the cellar-key, good sir. I'll draw a stoup of Canary."

"Ay, wine!" cried the Knight; "for my blood runs cold in my veins."

The servant lighted a rousing fire in the dining hall and warmed and spiced some generous wine, and after the fashion of the day, and there sat those two over the fire awaiting daylight and its revelations.

But meantime the night was fruitful in events. The prior, informed of Friar Richard's uncharitable interpretations had condemned him to vigil and prayer on the battlements of the yard from midnight until three of the clock. But the sly Richard at dusk had conveyed a chair into the yard to keep his knees off the cold hard stones.

At midnight, when he came to his enticed devotions; lo! there sat a figure in the chair. He started and took it for the prior, seated there to lecture him for luxury; but peeping he soon discovered it was Friar John.

He walked round and round him, talking at him, "Is it brother John or brother Richard, who is to keep vigil to night? I know but one friar in all this house would sit stargazing in his brother's chair, when that brother wants it to pray in."

Brother John vouchsafed no reply; and this stung his brother Richard, and he burned for revenge. "So be it then," said he, "since my place is taken, I will tell the prior, and keep vigil some other night." With this he retired, and slammed the door. But having thus disarmed, as he conceived, brother John's suspicion, he took up an enormous pebble, and slipped back on tip-toe, and getting near the angle of a wall, he flung his great pebble at brother John, and slipped hastily behind the wall; nevertheless, as he did, he had the satisfaction of seeing his pebble, which weighed about a pound, strike brother John on the nape of the neck, and there was a lumping noise and a great clatter, and Friar Richard chuckled with delight at the success of his throw. However he waited some minutes before he emerged, and then walked briskly out, like a new comer. There lay John flat, and the chair upset. Brother Richard ran to him, charged with hypocritical sympathy, and found his enemy's face very white, and felt his heart; he was stone dead!

The poor monk, whose hatred was of a mere feminine sort and had never been deadly, was seized with remorse, and he beat his breast, prayed in earnest, instead of repeating Peter nostrils, "precis sine mente dictas," as the great Erasmus calls them.

But other meetings soon succeeded; his enmity for the deceased was well known, and this would be called murder if the body was found in that yard, and his own life would pay the forfeit.

Casting his eyes round for a place where he might hide the body, he saw a ladder standing against the wall. This surprised him, but he was in no condition to puzzle over small riddles. Terror gave him force; he lifted the body and crawled up the ladder, and placed the body on the wall—it was wider than they build now—

then he drew up the ladder, set it on the other side and took his ghastly load down safely. Then, being naturally cunning and having his neck to save, he went and hid the ladder, took up the body, staggered with it as far as the porch of the Knight's house, and set it there bolt upright against one of the pillars.

As he carried it out of the yard he heard a window in the Knight's house open but couldn't see where the window was, nor whether he was watched and recognized; but he feared the worst, and such was the terror, he resolved to fly the place and bury himself in some distant monastery under another name.

But how? He was lame and could not go ten miles a day, whereas a hundred miles was little enough to make him secure.

After homicide, theft is no great matter; he resolved to borrow the master's mare, and turn her adrift when she had carried him beyond the hue and cry. So he went and knocked up the master and told him the convent wanted flour; and he was to go betimes to the miller for a sack thereof. Now the convent was a good customer to the master, so he lent Friar Richard the mare, a word, and told him where to find the saddle and bridle.

Richard fed the mare for a journey and saddled her; then he rode her at a foot-pace past the convent, meaning to go quietly through the town, making no stir, then away like the wind.

But, as he passed by the Knight's house, he cast a look askant to see if that ghastly object still sat in the porch.

No; the porch was empty.

What might that mean? Had he come to life? Had the murder been discovered? He began to wonder and tremble.

While he was in this mode there was a great clatter behind him of horses' feet, and clashing armor, and he felt he was pursued.

The Knight and his men sat together, drinking hot spiced wine and awaiting daylight. The Knight would not go to bed, yet he wanted a change. "Will daylight ever come?" said he.

"'Twill be here anon," said the soldier—"in half an hour."

The Knight said no; it would never come.

The soldier said he would go and look at the sky and tell him for certain.

"Be not long away," said the Knight with a shiver, or the dead Friar will be taking thy place here, and pledging me.

"Staid!" said the soldier. "He'll never trouble you more."

With this he marched out to consult the night, and almost ran against the dead friar seated in the porch, white and glaring; this was too much even for the iron soldier; he uttered a sharp yell, staggered back, and burst into the room gasping for breath. He got close to his master and stammered out, "The dead man!—sitting on the porch!" and crossed himself energetically, the first time these thirty years.

The Knight started and trembled; and so they drew close together, with their eyes over their shoulders.

"Wine!" cried the Knight.

"Ay," said the soldier; "but I go not alone. He'll be squatting on the cask else."

So they went together to the cellar, often looking round, and fetched two bottles.

They drank them out, and the good wine, falling more of the sort, made them madder and bolder. They rolled along, holding on by one another to the porch, and they stood and looked at the dead friar and shuddered.

But the soldier swore a great oath and vowed he should not stay there to get them hanged. Thereupon a furious fit of reckless succeeded to their terror; they got a suit of rusty armor and fastened it on the body; then they saddled an old war-horse that was kept in the stable only as a reminiscence, and tied the friar's body on him with many cords; they opened the stable door and pricked the old war-horse with their daggers, that he clattered out into the road with a bound and a great rattling of rusty armor.

Now, as ill-luck would have it, Friar Richard and his borrowed mare were pacing demurely through the town scarcely fifty yards ahead. The old horse nosed the mare, and, being left to choose his road, took very naturally after her; but when he got near her the monk looked round and saw the ghastly river. He gave a yell so piercing it waked the whole street, and for lack of spears, drove his bare heels into the mare's side; she cantered down the street at an easy pace; the earl-pauper cantered after; the friar kept turning and

cell, and prayed so much for the soul of brother John that at last he got to love him dead whom he had hated living.

Time rolled on. The knight's hair turned gray and the good prior died.

Then there was a great commotion in the little priory, and three or four of the leading friars each hoped to be prior.

That appointment lay with Sir Richard Erpingham. He attended the funeral of the late prior, and then desired the sub-prior to convene the monks. "Good brothers," said he, "your prior is brother Richard. I pray you to invest him forthwith, and yield him due love and obedience."

The Knight retired and the monks stared at each other awhile, and then obeyed, since there was no help for it; they invested brother Richard in due form, and such is the magic of station that in one moment they began to look on him with different eyes.

The new prior bore his dignity so meekly that he disarmed all hostility. His great rule of life was still "Honi qui mal y pense," and there is no course more apt to conciliate respect and good will. The Knight showed him favor and esteem, the monks learned to respect and by and by to revere him; but he never ceased to reproach himself and say masses for the soul of brother John.

The years rolled on. The Knight's gray hair turned white; and one day he sent for the prior and said to him: "Good Father, I have great matter to entertain you withal."

"Speak, wonderful sir," said the prior.

The Knight looked at him awhile, but seemed ill at ease, and as one that had resolved to speak, he was loath to begin. At last he said, "Sir, there be men that waste their goods in sin, or nearly board them freely to Mother Church after their death, when they can no longer enjoy them. Others there be whose breasts are laden with secret crime they ought to confess, and clear some worth man suspected falsely; yet they will not tell till they come to die. Methinks this is to be charitable too late, and just when justice can neither cost a man ought nor profit his neighbor. Therefore, not to be one of these, I will reveal to you now a deed that sits heavy on my conscience."

"You would confess to me, my son?"

"As man to man, sir, but not as a penitent to his confessor; for that were no merit in me; it would be no more than bury my secret in a fleshy grave. Nay, what I tell to you, you shall tell to all the world, if good may come of it."

Here the knight sighed and seemed much discomposed, like one who has wrestled with himself. Then he cast about how he should begin, and to conclude he opened the matter thus: "Sir, please you read that letter; it was writ by brother John unto my wife."

The prior read it but never said a word.

"Sir," said the Knight, "do you remember a sad time when you lay in Norwich jail accused of murder and cast for death?"

"I do remember it well, sir, and the uncharitable heart that brought me to the pass."

"Whilst you lay there, sir, something befell elsewhere, which I will hide no longer from you. The King being at his palace in London, a knight who had fought by his side in France sought an audience in private. It was granted him at once. Then the knight fell on his life and lands might be spared, though he had slain a man in heat of blood. The King was grave but gentle, and then I showed him that letter and owned the truth—that I and my servant, in our fury, had strangled that helpless monk."

"Alas, sir, did you take my guilt upon yourself to save my life, so fully forfeit? 'Twas I who hated him—'twas I who flung the stone."

"At a dead body. I tell thee, man, we strangled him and set his body up where you saw it, hand in his death, you had none."

The prior uttered a strange cry and was silent. The Knight continued in low voice:

"We set him in the yard, and when we found him in the porch, being half mad with terror and drink together, we bound him on the horse and launched him. All this I told the King, and he, considering the provocation and pitying too much his old companion in arms, gave me my life and lands, and gave me thine, which indeed was but bare justice. So now, sir, you know that you are innocent of bloodshed, and 'tis all my guilt."

The Knight looked at the churchman and thought to see him break forth into thanksgivings. But it was not so. The prior was deeply moved, but not ex-

following delegates to attend the State convention to be held in Nashville, on the 24th day of August next: Dr. B. W. Padgett and Dr. J. M. DeFriesse, Alternates, G. O. Cate and E. E. Clingan.

That the following named persons be appointed to attend the Congressional convention at such time and place as may be agreed upon viz: G. O. Cate, B. W. Padgett, Dr. J. L. Gaston and Dr. C. Patton.

That R. H. Guthrie, Peter Moninger, E. E. Clingan, James M. Seagle and Capt. J. W. Smith be appointed delegates to attend the senatorial convention, to nominate a candidate for State senator from this senatorial district, at such time and place as may be fixed.

That we request the Republicans of the counties of Meigs, Rhea and Cumberland to meet us in convention at Smith's X Roads, in Rhea county, on the second Saturday in August next, then and there to nominate a candidate to represent said counties in the next general assembly of the State of Tennessee, and we hereby appoint the following delegates to attend said convention:

J. M. DeFriesse, B. W. Padgett, Dr. B. W. Lee, Hon. John Anderson, W. Mathews, G. O. Cate, Alexander M. Nabb, W. L. Taylor and Dr. G. W. Clingan.

That we will heartily support the nominees for the various offices.

On motion the convention requested the secretary to furnish a copy of these proceedings to the Republican papers of Chattanooga and Cleveland, and that they be requested to publish the same.

G. W. CLINGAN; Chairman.  
R. H. GUTHRIE, Secretary.

**A Democratic view.**  
Chicago Times.

"It is entirely certain that Mr. Tilden is not a better man than Hayes, or as good a one. He has a record, and unfortunately, it is not one that will stand adverse criticism. Moreover, he is the selection of politician. He awakens no enthusiasm among the people. Hayes will beat him as badly as Grant beat Greeley."

**THE INDIAN WAR.**

**Horrible Details from Sioux City.**

A special from Sioux City says Indians there from the scene of Custer's fight give barbarous accounts of the treatment of the dead. A Indian named "Rain-in-the-Face" cut out Custer's heart and put it on a pole and had a grand war-dance around it. The Indians are jubilant and boastful. They hope to make better terms on account of success.

A dispatch from Fort Fetterman says there is not a word of truth in the rumor of General Crook's fight with Indians and defeat; that all sorts of rumors are afloat, which are contracted by officers, and nothing has been heard from General Crook for the past ten days. A courier is expected daily.

**NEW YORK.**

**Hayes and Wheeler Ratification Meeting.**

At the ratification of the Cincinnati platform and nominees, at Cooper Union Hall, a number were unable to gain admittance. The meeting was called to order by Col. Spencer. E. W. Stoughton presided. Two hundred Vice-Presidents and a hundred Secretaries were appointed. The speakers were Gov. Solomon, Gen. Kilpatrick and Judge Dillenhoffer. Letters of excuse from Gov. Dix and R. H. Dana, Jr., were read.

**NEW JERSEY.**

**Wholesale Killing in Newark.**

Three young German brothers named Fielem, desperate characters, were arrested, when they drew revolvers and shot one officer dead and another fatally and escaped to the shop from which they had been discharged, where they commenced an indiscriminate firing, killing one and wounding two. The workmen turned out en masse and drove the murderers toward the river with stones and knives. They leaped into the river and were stoned to death by the outraged workmen. One of the wounded workmen is dead.